

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

N E W SF L A S H E S

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LOAN EXHIBITIONS: The main Temporary Exhibition for the month of February will be devoted to Masters of Popular Painting and will fill the three central galleries. This group of some seventy-five paintings was originally exhibited last spring in the Museum of Modern Art of New York and is now being circulated by that institution. It includes both European and American examples of the work of the "modern primitives", as these naive or self-taught artists are called.

One of the most popular exhibitions held in connection with the World's Fair in Paris of two years ago was devoted to these "Maitres Poulaïres". The group was assembled by M. Andry-Farcy, director of the Grenoble Museum and Raymond Escholier of the Museum of the City of Paris. It was so successful that plans were made to bring part of it to New York and augment it with examples of such American artists as John Kane, Edward Hicks, and Joseph Pickett who paint in the same mood. The exhibition was as popular in New York as it had been in Paris.

Two excerpts from the catalogue of the Museum of Modern Art will give an understanding of the exhibition: "The painters who concern us in this exhibition were innocent of the world. They did not know that when they began to paint they joined the brotherhood of Giotto and Delacroix, Tintoretto and Cezanne. They never lived like artists; they rarely thought or spoke in terms of art. Because their impulse to paint was of an absolute and unqualified purity, the feeling and taste which their work expresses are, undistorted, the feeling and the taste of the class to which they belong. They have a right to be called artists of the people". (Jean Cassou)

"The discovery of this folk and popular art of the people has been the work of our generation. This art is very close to the sources of American Expression. The artists themselves came from many walks of life, but the kinds of art they produced are, basically, the art of the craftsman and the art of the amateur. Very few of these artists have had any professional training or book learning in art. But they had the art of making things with their hands, an art which has declined rapidly with the progress of the machine age, and most of them had the craftsman's respect for sound construction. Their work has special significance for our generation because we have discovered that we can take seriously, once more, the idea of art for the people." (Holger Cahill)

The European group will include such well-known names as Andre Bauchant, Camille, Bombois, Jean Eve, Paul Payronnet, Rene Rimbert, Henri Rousseau, Seraphine Louis and Louis Vivin. Among the American, Canadian, and Mexican artists will be Vincent Canade, Emile Branchard, Pedro Cervantez, Robert Cauchon, Edward Hicks, John Kane, Horace Pippin, and Patrick Sullivan.

All the canvases are marked by brilliant, positive colours, a disregard for perspective and distance, but their naive, child-like approach is especially refreshing. The exhibition will be an interesting and popular one and will call attention to a group of painters who were often unhonored, unsung, yet who painted because of some unexplainable urge within themselves. The exhibition will open on Wednesday, February 1st, and will continue through Sunday, the 26th.

VAN HUYSUM WATERCOLOURS: For the month of February, Gallery 13 will be installed with a series of watercolours of flowers by the great Dutch 17th century painter, Jan Van Huysum. These have been lent to the Gallery anonymously and are the first known studies in this medium by the well-known still life artist. The technique is delicate and miniature-like and the colours have the brilliancy of nature. Undoubtedly they served as studies for the more formal compositions of flowers and insect life for which Van Huysum was famous. These watercolours will be grouped about the fine oil painting from the permanent collection. Lovers of flowers will find great interest in these studies which are so true to nature and in addition are by a great painter.

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PHOTOGRAPH EXHIBITION: The annual exhibition of Photographs by members of the Heart of America Camera Club will be held in Gallery 16 during the month of February. The work of this club, which includes many of Kansas City's most active photographers, has progressed steadily and is winning national attention. Monthly contests of a given subject are held by the Club and their most representative work will be shown in this annual exhibition.

LINCOLN SUBJECTS: The Gallery is cooperating with the campaign which the Patriot's and Pioneer's Memorial Foundation is sponsoring during the month of February to obtain funds for a statue of Lincoln. There will be on exhibition in Kirkwood Hall two bronze replicas of statues of Lincoln by Daniel Chester French, lent by the Grand Central Galleries. In addition, a portrait of Lincoln by A. J. Conant will be hung in Gallery 29. This is one of the few full face portraits of the martyr President and has been lent by the Walker Gallery of Minneapolis.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: The permanent collection of American contemporary paintings has been enriched by another example presented by Mrs. Massey Holmes in memory of her husband. It is a very characteristic landscape, "Tchaikowsky's Sixth" by Ross Braught, former head of the department of painting at the Art Institute. It will be featured as the Masterpiece of the Month for February.

Braught is a poet and a mystic and is little concerned with the contemporary American scene. The desolate and eroded bad lands of South Dakota, the empty beaches of the West Indies appeal more to him than do the habitations of man. He is equally at home in lithography and his illustrations to "Phaeton" in this medium are popular as is his "Maca Sica" which won the print prize in the Mid-Western of 1935. His best known work in Kansas City is the mural on the stairway of the Music Hall of the Municipal Auditorium. It is fine in colour and noble in conception and the central theme is the myth of Mnemosyne, the daughter of heaven and earth and the goddess of memory. It is especially successful in complementing its architectural setting.

"Tchaikowsky's Sixth" is painted thinly and dryly in the metallic tones of greens, coppers, and silvers that Braught favors. The eroded earth writhes and undulates and unconsciously one imagines and discerns human forms or monsters lurking in the convolutions. The canvas is divided into three fairly even sections of foreground, middle, and background and an easy rhythm carries the eye across each division. The scene has the eerie quality and black shadows of moonlight, and the one living creature, a white dove, heightens rather than dispels the feeling of loneliness of the whole. Even the cheerful blues of the sky cannot change the very definite mood that Braught has created here.

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: The series of lectures devoted to a survey of Italian painting will be continued through the month of February. On Wednesday, the first, the subject will be the three great artists of the Full Renaissance, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo. Their work is the culmination of two centuries of experimentation and discovery and their paintings are perhaps the best known in the history of art. Like so many men of the period, their activity extended to sculpture, architecture, and poetry, as well as painting.

On Wednesday Evening, February 8th, the Umbrian School will be discussed. The work of the artists of this section of Italy, centering about Perugia, is marked by a sense of delicate mysticism, of great breadth, engendered by the Umbrian plains. The men are Gentile da Fabriano, with his miniature like technique and love of gold and contemporary costumes, Perugino with his sincere religious compositions, Pinturicchio with his jewel-like contemporary scenes, and Signorelli of the impressive monumentality.

It was inevitable that the level of the genius of such men as Leonardo and Michelangelo could not be maintained, and the work of the men of the middle 16th century is marked by a decline. The artists, including Andrea Del Sarto, Bronzino, Pontormo, Parmigianino, and Baroccio, are usually called the Mannerists because of the elongated elegance and the artificiality they introduced into their compositions. Their work will be discussed on Wednesday Evening, February 15th.

There will be no lecture on Wednesday, February 22nd, Washington's Birthday, and the Gallery will be closed that evening, but will be open from two until six.

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FRIENDS OF ART: There will be only one study class for the Friends of Art, due to the holiday on the second Wednesday. On February 8th, the loan exhibition, Masters of Popular Painting, will be discussed. The paintings in the exhibition will be brought to the Library and the importance and aim of the movement will be the subject of Mr. Gardner's talk.

GALLERY ACTIVITIES: Laurence Sickman, Curator of Oriental Art, who has been on leave of absence at Harvard University since last September, will return to the Gallery and his duties here the middle of February. He will stop in Chicago en route here from the East to give a lecture at the Art Institute.

CALENDAR FOR FEBRUARY

Wed., Feb. 1, 8:00 - Auditorium - Lecture: The Full Florentine Renaissance - Mr. Gardner
Sun., " 5, 3:30 - Auditorium - Concert: Federal Concert Orchestra
Wed., " 8, 11:00 - Library - Friends of Art Study Class
Wed., " 8, 8:00 - Auditorium - Lecture: The Umbrian School
Sun., " 12, 3:30 - Auditorium - Concert: Harriet Rothschild and Millayann Cantrell
Wed., " 15, 8:00 - Auditorium - Lecture: The Mannerists
Sun., " 19, 3:30 - Auditorium - Concert: Sigma Alpha Iota
Wed., " 22, Gallery Open from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. - No evening Opening
Sun., " 26, 4:00 - Auditorium - Concert: Under direction Mrs. Lois Black Hunt and Miss Edna Forsythe

NEW COLOUR PRINTS: Two new prints have been added to those for sale at the entrance desk - an 8x10" colour print of the new Gauguin "Reverie" and a full size colour reproduction of the Corot "View of Subiaco". The Gauguin sells at twenty-five cents and the Corot at \$2.50. We should like to call your attention also to the fact that the price of the black and white postcards has been reduced to two for one cent.

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art
Kansas City, Missouri

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